

Volume C No. 5

April 5, 1974

50 cents

commonweal



THE EUROPEANIZATION OF AMERICAN POLITICS

IRVING
LOUIS
HOROWITZ



CHILDREN OF CAIN?
SISYPHUS

THE ARDEATINE MASSACRE
HENRY TEN KORTENAAR

AGAINST 'AFFIRMATIVE ACTION'
MICHAEL NOVAK

CUBA, SI!
COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

NUDE DESCENDING
DENNIS O'BRIEN

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CELINA OH 45822
CARHADENA STA
ST CHARLES SEM L18
4-12697 12-74
42-21 2697-4

NEWS & VIEWS

Auden's Requiem

In the Winter issue of *The Columbia Forum*, author-professor Frank MacShane reflects on the Requiem High Mass celebrated in October for W. H. Auden at New York's Cathedral of St. John the Divine:

"It was an appropriate observance for a poet who had broken away from a pious home and then returned to Anglican orthodoxy . . . full choir, the dean and his chapter of canons, Horace Donagan, the retired bishop of New York—all of them dressed in red and white, with surplices of every color trimmed with gold. There was a brass choir and kettle drums, and, for the processional, banners and candles and clouds of incense rising in the high vaulted nave and the Gothic choir.

"It was, in fact, like the burial of a Head of State. And despite the annoying television cameras and lights, the spectacle was not only impressive but moving. The awesomeness of death in so overwhelming a place was upheld by the Vaughan Williams setting of 'For all the saints who from their labors rest'—even by Benjamin Britten's musical arrangement of Auden's wry little poem:

O lift your little pinkie.
and touch the winter sky.
Love's all over the mountains
where the beautiful go to die.

Then seven poets—Robert Penn Warren, Galway Kinnell, Muriel Rukeyser, Richard Wilbur, William Meredith, Richard Howard, and Ursula Niebuhr—read from his work, and the range of his mastery was before us, superseding the theatricality of the High Mass, from the matter-of-fact opening of 'September 1, 1939'

I sit in one of the dives
On Fifty-second Street
Uncertain and afraid. . .

to the high diction of 'In Memory of W.B. Yeats':

He disappeared in the dead
of winter:

The brooks were frozen,
the airports almost deserted,

And snow disfigured the
public statues. . .

"Certainly I never knew Auden well, never even called him by his first name. He was only an acquaintance, one who was always correct and courteous but never warm. Yet while the great pageant of death moved me by itself, it also seemed to celebrate something more. It expressed Auden's *generalized* good will, his benevolent influence on contemporary life. Auden created touchstones to which individuals could bring their own personal experiences of the 'Age of Anxiety,' which he named. His work gave resonance to the times in a manner that was at once formal and unpretentious. . .

"It took the High Mass to clarify my sense of Auden. I had thought that all his feelings had gone into the poems, but the Requiem reminded me that the feelings came from Auden the man. This is of course the paradox of life and art, which the High Mass symbolizes. What is transient becomes permanent; and conversely, old forms are given new life."

Acton and Nixon

Lord Acton's aphorism—"Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely"—is by now almost a cliché. Less familiar is the context in which it appeared, and this was recalled recently by *Washington Post* reader Gordon M. Murray to make a point about . . . who else but Richard Nixon?

In a letter to Mandell Creighton, a bishop of the Church of England, on April 5, 1887, Acton said in part:

"I cannot accept your canon that we are to judge Pope and King unlike other men, with a favorable presumption that they did no wrong. If there is any presumption it is

the other way against holders of power, increasing as the power increases. Historic responsibility has to make up for the want of legal responsibility. Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad, even when they exercise influence and not authority; still more when you superadd the tendency or the certainty of corruption by authority. There is no worse heresy than that the office sanctifies the holder of it. . . ."

Gordon's point:

"Let no one be taken in by the argument that the President is protecting the presidency. How much, then, should the presidency be expected to protect the President?"

Shorter Work-Week

The Manchester Guardian has come up with an interesting statistic in connection with Britain's recent three-day work-week experience: "In spite of a 60 percent reduction in hours of work, industrial production only fell to 70 percent of the normal."

"Perhaps it was the absence of late-night television. Perhaps it was a new-found ingenuity." Either way, said *The Guardian*, whatever contributed to the increased productivity rates should be explored and reapplied.

The Guardian's point was that "if a factory can produce 70 percent of normal output

in three days, it can produce 115 percent in five days and 140 percent in six."

That's an argument that doesn't necessarily follow for proponents of a shorter work-week—most certainly not if it is the one crew working the five days or the six days that is expected to hike the percentages. Proponents of a three- or four-day work week would link performance during the recent crisis to increased worker efficiency resulting from the lesser hours worked.

In any case, look for *The Guardian's* statistic to crop up when unions next push the shorter work-week idea.

A Last Thanks

It is sad at any magazine when it loses a contributor to death, and this week *Commonweal* has double reason for sadness. Lost to death were Dr. Charles Thomas Samuels, a professor in the English Department at Williams College, and Michele Murray, the novelist, poet and critic of Bethesda, Md.

Dr. Samuels and Mrs. Murray did considerable book reviewing for *Commonweal*, particularly during the 1960s when both were establishing solid reputations in their literary specialties.

Dr. Samuels became an authority on Henry James and John Updike. Shortly before his death, he completed a last book review for *Commonweal* that is in type and awaiting publication.

Mrs. Murray's extensive book reviewing for a number of journals in addition to *Commonweal* led to her becoming book editor at *The National Observer*, a post she held at the time of her death and had fulfilled admirably.

Dr. Samuels' death was sudden; Mrs. Murray's, after a lengthy illness with cancer. Both were young—he, 38; she, 40. Both leave spouses and young families. The greatest loss is theirs, and we grieve with them.

JOHN DEEDY



CORRESPONDENCE



Nude Interruptions

Manchester, N.H.

To the Editors: I am sure that many of your readers are waiting impatiently for the appearance in these pages of a fully developed theology of "streaking." Not possessing the scholarly tools required for the task, I hereby offer to whoever has them a possible fundamental motif. Adam, who knew that God was watching but wished that He were not, donned a fig leaf and took to the trees. Modern man, who thinks that God is not watching but wishes that he were, doffs the leaf and takes to the streets. Harvey Cox, Charles Davis, Tom Driver, take it from there!

FRANK REILLY

Going to the Devil

Nahant, Mass.

To the Editors: Michael Novak makes some good points in his little essay on the Devil [Feb. 22]. There is a lot of mindless optimism going around. [And some mindless pessimism.] Rationalists think they can exorcise the Evil One by ignoring him. It is intellectually unfashionable to acknowledge his existence. Okay. But it is also intellectually unfashionable to acknowledge the existence of the Good One and the powerful and mysterious ways He works, even through those who do not consciously believe in Him, even through those who consciously deny Him. It isn't in Scripture, but the wisdom of experience also tells us that "God writes straight with crooked lines."

Optimism and pessimism seem to be a matter of a man's genes and metabolism. Jimmy the Greek has never been able to give us odds on how the world is going to come out. It is easy to conclude that man, left to the Devil and his own devices, looks like a loser.

I got the Bible out and combed it for Novak's quotation to the effect that this world "belongs to the Father of

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COMMONWEAL A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature and the Arts.

Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y.

Printed in the USA and published weekly,

except biweekly Christmas-New Year's and June to mid-September,

by Commonweal Publishing Co., 232 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016

Murray Hill 3-2042. Copyright © 1974 Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc.

US and Canada: \$14 a year. Foreign \$16. Single copies 50c

THE BUCKLEY BRIEF

New York Senator James L. Buckley's call for President Richard M. Nixon's voluntary resignation may seem, at first glance, one of the finer moments of modern American conservatism. Buckley—best known for his sponsorship of the "Pro-Life" Amendment and for being the brother of a columnist and TV personality—is often described as a "moral" politician, and his decision to suddenly oppose the President he had helped elect is widely understood as welling up from his integrity. But his full statement demands a close look.

Conservatism, in the best sense of the word, stands for the preservation of those fundamental principles that form the basis of our democracy, and adherence to the rights and procedures that guarantee both freedom and stability in the state. The conservative resists change partly because he mistrusts a fallen human nature too susceptible to promises of a heaven on earth, and partly because he sees his conscience as guided by an unchanging natural law. Thus the conservative tends to suspect the popular will on political and moral issues; what is right for the individual and, in the long run, for society must be determined not by how the masses of the people feel but, as Senator Buckley says, by obedience to "the dictates of reason and conscience."

President Nixon has correctly seen conservative support as his last contact point with "legitimacy"—with a bloc of voters and political leaders who have a clear-cut idea of what the American spirit is supposed to be and who like to look at the issues in sharp terms of right and wrong. Thus, while the true conservative arguments are potentially the strongest for impeachment or resignation, conservative political backing has been Nixon's last claim to respectability and he has set out to hold onto that one-third-plus-one of the Senate—mostly conservatives—needed to block his conviction if he is impeached by the House.

Against this background the Buckley manifesto could have been a turning point in the relationship between conservatism and the President. But it flopped. It failed particularly where it should have been strongest: in its adherence to the American conservative tradition, in the logic of its argument, and in its confrontation with the moral issues. Rather it is a mélange

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of naive romance, regal rhetoric, distrust of the people, a Nixonian hatred of the media, and blindness to the real moral crisis we face.

The original Watergate burglary, he says, was a "trivial and foolish" incident that has now swollen into an "affair"—some kind of a vast, metaphysical historical force—a "crisis of the regime," a "trauma," with, at its heart, "felt truths" and a "perception of corruption" that have destroyed the President's ability to govern. It would have been more correct to say that the original burglary, far from being trivial, was an integral part of a whole network of unethical and criminal operations put in motion by the President himself.

Why not impeachment? Because "public opinion would compel the proceedings to be televised" and "the ruler of the mightiest nation on earth would be starred as a prisoner in the dock. The chamber would become a 20th-century Roman Coliseum as performers are thrown to the electronic lions." Nixon the Christian martyr? Indeed the proposed resignation is to be the "magnanimous act of sacrifice" of a guiltless man. He

must step aside so that a new strong President can save us from "a runaway Congress that could commit us to new and dangerous programs from which we may never be able to extricate ourselves." What programs? Judging from the Buckley record he probably means increased Social Security and minimum wages, environmental control, government support of mass transit, arms limitation, civil rights and consumer protection.

Aside from stating that the captain is responsible for the ship, nowhere does Senator Buckley imply that the President, who ordered illegal wiretaps, created the "Plumbers," secretly bombed Cambodia, offered Judge Byrne the FBI directorship during the Ellsberg trial, failed to report the Watergate cover-up when he knew of it, and who *still* brags about his Christmas bombing of Hanoi as if it were an act of heroism, has done anything wrong.

It might be argued that Senator Buckley has so badly handled the most important issue facing American conservatives that there is real doubt he can ever again provide proper leadership for his constituents. Maybe he should resign.



PIUS XII ACCUSED

THE ARDEATINE MASSACRE

When, in the last minute of George Pan Cosmatos' film *Reprisal*, on the 1944 massacre of the Ardeatine caves in Rome, SS-Obersturmbannführer Herbert Kappler (Richard Burton) and the imaginary priest Antonelli (Marcello Mastroianni) face each other, screenwide eye to screenwide eye, even the untrained moviegoer knows they are involved in a "mute dialogue." After a few long seconds Antonelli turns his head, Kappler pulls the trigger, and the priest's body falls. On the screen appear the names of the 335 victims, but we have no time to notice there is no Antonelli among them—though there *was* a priest, Pietro Pappagallo, an inmate of the German police-prison, on suspicion of "Communist activities."

But, however mutely, a question has been asked, and it sounds: "Who is guilty?" By then, the audience has seen enough to know the answer. Obviously not the noble, compassionate, Homer-quoting Kappler (who today is still in an Italian military prison for his part in the affair); nor the Jodls, Kesselrings, and Mackensens, the whole long chain which Hitler's order has traveled, to end in the shooting of 335 Italians: 10 for each SS-soldier killed by partisans the previous day, and 5 thrown in "by mistake." No, they are all caught up in the "grinding wheels," as Kappler has explained to Antonelli, and there is no one who can stop the wheels, except the

one man who in the film is never called by his name, but only by his title "the Holy Father": Pope Pius XII.

To establish the Pope's "guilt," scriptwriter Robert Katz has obviously no use for a real priest, suspected of Communist activities. What he needs is the exact counterpart of that other equally unbelievable character: Riccardo Fontana in *The Deputy*, an innocent believer who, shocked by the sudden discovery of evil, appeals to the Pope for intervention and, after receiving his refusal, joins the victims. Fontana ends his days at Auschwitz; Antonelli hops on a bike and hurries after the German lorries to the caves, where he arrives just on time for his final meeting with Kappler.

The device shows that Katz' case is not as strong as he pretends. In his book *Death in Rome* the accusations against Pope Pius were only a sideline; what he set out to do, and did well enough, was a historical account of the partisan attack and the bloody retaliation, which, strangely enough, had not been done before. But in the film the prominence of Antonelli and his imaginary conflict puts Pius XII's supposed refusal to prevent the massacre in the foreground. This is probably the reason why only now, after the release of the film in Italy, Katz has been charged, along with producer Carlo Ponti and director Cosmatos, with defamation of Pope Pius XII. Until now, he has always maintained it is up to the

Vatican to refute his charges. The church authorities, he insists, never answered his questions, and among the hundreds of documents published in recent years on the Vatican's activities in World War II there is none which proves that Father Pankratius Pfeiffer (the German Salvatorian, who acted as intermediary between the Pope and the German authorities) did *not* inform the Pope of the imminent reprisal (a kind of Watergate argument, but without the tapes).

However, since Katz is now defendant in a libel-suit, the burden of proof is on him, and the evidence he has produced so far is not impressive. His main witness is Eugen Dollmann, at the time SS representative at the German Embassy, who has always said he knew nothing of the reprisal until all was over, but in 1965 told Katz that not only did he know it was coming, he immediately warned Father Pfeiffer and told him to request the Pope's intervention. Though this version was clearly much more favorable to Dollmann himself, and the only witness who could contradict it, Father Pfeiffer, had in the meantime died in a car-accident, Katz swallowed it whole, and based his accusations on it.

He now says he has more trumps up his sleeve, and one was produced on the second day in court, when his lawyer presented the list of requested defense-witnesses. Among the names of Dollmann, Kappler, Msgr. Val-lainc (former head of the Vatican press-office), also figured that of the present Pope. In 1944, the lawyer explained, Msgr. Montini had been Pius XII's closest collaborator, and therefore he *must* have kept notes of the Pope's conversations during the crucial days of March 23-24. Of course, Katz does not expect that the judge will ever grant such a request, nor that Pope Paul would voluntarily step into the Ehrlichman-size shoes Katz has set out for him. It is simply another attempt to shift the burden of proof onto the Vatican, and whatever the outcome of the trial, he can always claim that the Vatican silence is a confirmation of his own allegations.

Anyhow, it made a big splash, which added nicely to the already colorful setting. There was the plaintiff, Contessa Elena Rossignani, daughter of Pope Pius' sister, Elisabetta Pacelli. There was the excited old gentleman who tried to attack Katz and called him a dirty liar. There was Agostino Greggi, a staunch defender of public morals and oldtime Catholicism, who tried twice, in vain, to be admitted as second plaintiff, on behalf of a "Committee of Romans in defense of Pius XII," which he claimed represented hundreds of thousands of Roman workers, whose lives and homes were saved by the Pope and who are "scandalized" by the book and the film.

Unfortunately, he and his court of elderly Roman ladies are unaware of what is going on around them. In the neighborhood cinema where I saw the movie, there was a big laugh at each mention of "the Holy Father."

Pope Pius, once fanatically venerated as "defensor civitatis," has lost most of his popularity. There are many causes for this, but Hochbuth and Katz are not among them—they are at most one of the less savory effects. But they have found a ready public and, while it is relatively easy to dispose of their caricature of Pius as a greedy, cynical, calculating tyrant (which he decidedly was not), it may be almost impossible to correct the distorted image they have created in the public mind.

But the worst is that all efforts in that direction tend to blur the real issue, which is not that of the Pope's real or supposed personal guilt, but of the collective guilt, or inadequacy, of the Catholic Church in the modern world—of which, to be sure, its attitudes and actions in World War II present the most significant and terrifying parable. Personally, I am convinced that the reflection on the war-experience has been among the deepest causes of the change which has taken place in the Church during the last twenty years. To many of us the questions asked by Mauriac, Bernanos, Haecker and others, during and after the war, and the findings of scholars like Gordon Zahn and Guenther Lewy have been the mirror in which we discovered what the Church had become. The experience struck at the root of the traditional doctrine of the Church as a *perfect society* which, being on the same level of dignity and power as the worldly states, has to use their same weapons of diplomatic skill and wisdom—to the inevitable neglect of its prophetic mission, which belongs to a "kingdom *not* of this world."

Of course, it is our duty to defend Pius XII's honor against unjust attacks, but it must not distract our attention from the real urgent questions, which lie elsewhere. Robert Katz has every good reason to object that they are none of his business. Right; so let's not waste too much energy on him, either.

HENRY TEN KORTENAAR

(Henry ten Kortenaar is Commonweal's regular correspondent in Rome.)

COMING

KENNETH SEIB writes in the Education Issue about an academic freedom issue in California:

"When Fresno State sought its fourth president in the peaceful days of the mid-1960s, it selected Dr. Frederick W. Ness, whose credentials were impeccable. A Ph.D. in English from Yale, Ness had been executive vice-president of Hofstra University, vice-president and dean of Long Island University, and academic vice-president of Dickinson College. Furthermore, Ness *looked* like a college president—an erect and confident man who was just the sort to greet wealthy alumni and to speak to Rotary clubs. He even smoked a pipe. The flirtation between Ness and the college ended in 1967 in what has become known as The Mezey Case."

AGAINST 'AFFIRMATIVE ACTION'

MICHAEL NOVAK

The real question, under conditions of scarcity, is who gets left out. There are not enough places in law school for all who want to get in. To enter medical school, many have to study abroad. Scarcity limits scholarships and financial aid: fellowships and offers of a position. Thousands of Ph.D's look in vain for jobs, just as hundreds of thousands abandon college to go to work in factories or stores because they cannot qualify for financial aid.

The recent divisive preference of our Lords Spiritual of Opinion for the most needy in our midst—Blacks, Latinos, and Indians—has quite properly enlarged the numbers of those demanding to get in. But when more Blacks, Latinos, and Indians do get into American professions, as they should, who will be left out? The probability is extraordinarily high that it will be Italian and Slavic Catholics.

Jews, whose family culture and informal social system prepares them well for a meritocratic system of advancement in the professions, rightly fear that "quotas" and "affirmative action" will reproduce in modern form the ancient system of keeping them out, not because they lack talent or preparation, but because they are not the proper ethnic group.

Jewish family culture and social systems have no peer, perhaps, in preparing their young to excel. Instead of revising other family cultures and social systems so as to prepare their young equally well, a strategy of "quotas" and "affirmative action" makes room for the less prepared and penalizes the more prepared. Any shift away from meritocracy is a threat to Jewish liberty; it alters the open future made possible for Jews by the Enlightenment and by American democracy.

The situation of Southern and Eastern European Catholics is quite dif-

ferent from that of Jews, just as it is different (according to Andrew Greeley's studies) from that of the Irish. On Wall Street, in the legal professions, in medicine, in politics, the Irish have been succeeding brilliantly. In scholarship and in the arts, they are beginning to be represented in proportion to their numbers.

But, as Richard Gambino recounts in his entertaining and moving new book, *Blood of My Blood* (Doubleday, \$7.95), there are already in New York City more Black professionals than Italian-American professionals (9 percent vs. 8 percent). Italian-Americans face special difficulties with entrance boards of medical schools, especially the prestigious ones. And if in the creative arts, particularly in the cinema, Italian-Americans have found a field in which their talent is unhindered and free, in the City University of New York and in university faculties everywhere, particularly in the higher ranks, they are woefully under-represented.

The situation of Slavic-Americans is even more bleak. Stan Franczyk of Buffalo, one of the great champions of a new Polish "leap forward" in American life, points out that Poles constitute some forty percent of the population in and near Buffalo. Yet in the local University law school, of 720 places only 23 are held by Polish-Americans; in the hundreds of Buffalo banks, until recently, not a single executive officer was Polish-American; newspapers and television channels do not reflect the Polish-American population in a representative way; even in political patronage, Poles rank fifth; the powers that govern the mayor's office and the economic life of the area are not Polish-American.

The shelf of writing about the Slavic-American experience is dreadfully small. Even the barest demog-

raphic facts are not known. On Boards of Trustees, among deans and college presidents, and in places of real power and influence, Slavic-Americans are virtually invisible. The slight cultural shock induced by the name Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich suggests the extent to which American experience has hardly been altered by the large, indigestible Slavic presence in its midst.

Writing in *The Notre Dame Journal of Education* (winter, 1973), George Steven Swan points out that in 1970 the proportion of Afro-Americans in college significantly exceeded the proportion of Italian-Americans and Slavic Americans. In Detroit in 1960, 75 percent of the lawyers in firms (i.e., those with statistically far higher income) were of Northwest European origin; solo attorneys came "from the Slavic and Mediterranean countries (fifty percent from East and South Europe)." He calls his article, quite properly, "The Double Standard and the Catholic Minorities." He hopes such Catholics will not passively accede to being left out.

I am sometimes tempted to conclude from such a train of thought that "affirmative action" and/or "quotas" offer a sound social strategy, and ought to be extended to Slavic-Americans and Italian-Americans right along with Blacks, Latinos, and Indians.

But, after a good deal of inner conflict, my judgment and my instincts have come together in a deep revulsion against ethnic preferences for *anybody*. It is preposterous to try to alter the effects of history, in one generation, by fiat. Slavic-Americans and Italian-Americans are far more talented, disciplined, and prepared for creativity than most Americans notice; but they are not yet good enough.

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THE EUROPEANIZATION OF AMERICAN POLITICS

IRVING LOUIS HOROWITZ



A Watergate retrospective

Watergate is more than an historic event in American politics. It is an apocalyptic event in American morality. It represents a benchmark to the abrupt termination of a two-hundred-year-old age of innocence, empirical confirmation that Providence has abandoned America for parts as yet unknown. Textbooks on law and political science have been filled with an equilibrium model of how the United States works: checks and balances between executive, legislative and judicial branches of government; an everlasting stasis between the two political parties; a firm belief in the responsiveness of federal authorities to vox populi. Indeed, the foresight of the founding fathers, the authors of the Federalist papers such as Madison, Jay, Adams and Jefferson, was enough to make one believe in miracles. But there was one great fly in the ointment. The founding fathers of the Constitution predicated everything, and staked everything, on the belief that those who rule, although chosen by the people and hence not always brilliant, would at the very least be honest. And it is the age of the politician as an honest man in the Montesquieu sense of *l'esprit des lois*, that came crashing down with Watergate.

The Federalists were thoroughly aware of the dangers in any concentration of powers in the hands of a single charismatic leader. But in their writings and in their age it was the prospect of too much power in the hands of the legislative branch that was of paramount concern. They feared that in this "first new nation" it was a legislative majority that would become unhinged and threaten the rights of the minority. And they had ample evidence from the inherited European systems of this

sort of "mobocracy." Being men of property only reinforced this sensibility to legislative constraint.

The issue was how to increase the powers of the Presidency to counterbalance the presumed potency of the legislative branch. The idea of a single President rather than a plural Presidency was debated. It prevailed on the basis of yet another assumption: the existence of a judicial electoral college comprised of leading citizens. What in effect took place was an early break with the utilitarian-enlightenment premise that major decisions should not be made by one man acting in isolation, but by a collective body of elected officials. Most institutions, from corporations to voluntary agencies, are run on the premise of checks and balances generated by plural executive leadership. The primary exception of note to this pluralism is the American Presidency. And with the concomitant rise of expertise replacing electoral officials in the decision-making roles, the Presidency became not just largely independent of legislative or judicial controls, but insulated from such constraints. The growth of the "imperial Presidency" coupled with the decline of legislative capacity for autonomous action was thus the constitutional backdrop to unchecked power, otherwise known today as corruption in government.

It is not that American politics is any more corrupt or dishonest than it ever was; this is a debatable position. Rather, it is that the evidence of corruption has been so sharply presented by the mass media that even the most duncelike devotee of American political mythology can no longer escape awareness of political corruption. Rather than leading to universal morality, mass politics has led down the slithering path of selective pragmatism, a word that has become a euphemism for collective immorality. But since this is a change in the perception

IRVING LOUIS HOROWITZ is professor of sociology and political science at Rutgers University and Editor of *Society*.

rather than the reality of American politics, the real issue becomes: Why now? What has happened to compel a lifting of the shades, to reveal a cracked windowpane behind which the exercise of politics is conducted as the impromptu use of raw power, simply to retain government office?

One convenient fiction is that the Senatorial hearings, and the subsequent revelations of the Cox review commission, reveal an autodidactic learning and healing process. It is asked more in desperation than in certainty: where else in the world would such revelations of corruption in high places have taken place, and beyond that, if revealed, have not shaken the nation to its roots and foundations? Yet, Presidential authorities fought these special Senatorial hearings tooth and nail; withholding support, information and finally, openly confronting and challenging the legitimacy of the Ervin subcommittee to hold public hearings altogether. And the Cox commission, the executive counterpart of a Congressional committee, once it got close to the connection between Presidential policy and economic manipulation, was overthrown in a frightful putsch, a one-day takeover that involved a Federal Bureau of Investigation seal-off of the Cox commission offices that frightened even the more ardent supporters of the President.

The idea that the Watergate revelations are an un-mixed blessing, represents sophism. It assumes, somewhat grotesquely, that only a state organ in a condition of total corruption can elicit the real health of the body politic. This is a sort of bourgeois equivalent to the vulgar Trotskyist "theory" that the worse things are in the present, the better must they get in the future. Such forms of explanation as offered by the legion of Presidential advisors and apologists are, in effect, not explanations at all, but panegyrics and hyperbolic nonsense. The plain truth, as everyone recognizes with a sigh of relief, is that the fascist timetable, coming in the form of nervous nativism, has been seriously derailed, if not permanently stalled by the Watergate hearings. At least in its elitist variety, the fascist threat to suspend civil liberties and to equate criticism with subversion and opposition with anti-patriotism has been profoundly weakened. That this in turn has led to a serious lacunae, a state of suspended political animation in which power itself appears to be exercised in a vacuum, is a deeper outcome of the Watergate revelations. In other words, the consequence of Watergate was a derailment of one classic form of the fascist timetable which in turn led to a power vacuum clearly attested to by the current paralysis which characterizes United States foreign policy from the Middle East to Southeast Asia.

To illustrate this paralysis, it would be difficult to imagine a nation as powerful and imperial in its pretensions as the United States bowing so meekly to the wishes of Saudi Arabian oil ministers, did there not exist

a real crisis in United States foreign policy. In this sense, the Arab oil embargo was fortuitous in its timing. It corresponded precisely with a paralysis in the United States' internal affairs. As a result, if for no other reason than to have breathing space to restore the confidence of its public, American foreign policy is at an all time low ebb with respect to bellicosity and belligerence. Whether this has happened as a result of Arab intransigence or Soviet planning is less significant than the simple fact that under conditions of domestic intransigence the imperial eagle has turned into an international pigeon. As a result, the United States may be compelled to deal harshly and even punitively with internal dissension. It is, after all, far simpler to manage internal threats from unemployed laborers or disenfranchised minority groups than to respond to overseas threats from "Third World" sheikdoms which nonetheless have the capacity to call upon Second World bolsheviks.

Watergate has thus served to reinforce already widening tendencies toward neo-isolationism; toward an intense turning within, no less than turning inward. The rise of spiritualism, psychology, healing and all sorts of "su-



perstitious" beliefs from palm-reading and astrology to devil worship reveals a sure-sighted collapse of any willingness (even if we presume the capacity) of America's political rulers to risk a world war on the say-so of a President who has proven himself to be less than candid. The recent Congressional passage over a Presidential veto, of a measure limiting the war-making powers of the executive office, that is, the Commander-in-Chief, is an indication, not only of a breakdown of confidence in the Presidency of Richard M. Nixon, but a collapse of moral verve and belief in the ability of the United States to win wars, and not simply engage in them.

The principal consequence of Watergate is that it reflects the growing intensity of inner-party and intra-party conflict in the United States. In the past, the structure of American party politics was best described as a matter of shadings and nuances between fundamentally similar organizational types; whereas in the post-McGovern reform period, the gaps between the two parties have become much sharper, calling into question fundamental premises about who governs, the nature of state responsibility for the welfare of the poor, the obligations for a full-employment society, and even the racial, class

and sexual composition of the party leadership itself. More than that, as the present half-way Keynesian house began to show its cracks, the need to move beyond well-farism became paramount. Hence, a polarization process commenced, with the dominant wing of the Republican party embracing a doctrine of law, order, respect for leaders, continued high military expenditures, in short the verities of what Lasswell long ago identified as the Garrison State. The Democrats, for their part, became acutely aware of the theme of social injustice: the rights of black minorities and the outrageous iniquities against majorities like women.

Coming into the 1970s, the competing philosophies of the two parties could be summarized as follows: for the Republicans, the main purpose of citizenship is service to the state; for the Democrats, the main concern of the state is service to its citizens. This classic dichotomy, with roots that go deep in Western political thought, became the substance of the 1972 elections that at times was disguised by differences in personal styles. As the party of power, the Republicans were not about to risk everything in exchange for an "alien" McGovern philosophy that must have seemed to the likes of Nixon, Ehrlichman, Haldeman, Magruder, *et al.* a veritable assault on 200 years of the American way of life. In this sense, Watergate was but one incident in the ongoing struggle between conservatives and radicals, all of whom ostensibly accepted the confines of American social structure. But in the polarized party analysis of what is right and wrong with the American structure, a cleavage between Democrats and Republicans was revealed that was as deep, if not deeper, than what exists throughout the European political system.

A major reason that worldwide opinion on Watergate has been aroused is the intrinsic appreciation of the extent to which American politics, in the past said to have been providentially guided toward eternal consensus, has become Europeanized. Europeans are familiar with crisis in governmental confidence, dismissal of leading political officials for corruption and dishonesty in the conduct of duty and the cynical manipulation of public office and public trust for private gain. The shock of recognition for the American public was that the American political system is not exempt from the laws governing any other parliamentary regime. In fact, Providence took this moment to abandon America to its own devices, a condition of being adrift that is well known in Western European capitals suffering under a feeble tradition of parliamentary cretinism and executive corruption.

The reason that Watergate became a post-electoral rather than pre-electoral scandal is first and foremost the huge power of the Republican party apparatus to delay any real investigation of the break-in of the Democratic party headquarters until the elections were well out of the way. The clever if transparent rationale is that to have done otherwise, would have turned the investigation into

a political football. But a second factor, perhaps equally necessary for the scandal to remain buried for so long, is the strange capacity of the Democratic party to engage in self-deception. In part, this was a consequence of the bitterness of the conservative factions of the party which lost out to its radical wing. But even such an erstwhile figure as Gary Hart, Senator McGovern's campaign manager, barely mentions Watergate as a factor in his book-length review of the 1972 campaign. However, when the elections were held, and the Presidential landslide became apparent (even in the face of stiff popular resistance to Republican party candidates at Congressional and statewide levels), then the full recognition of how this landslide was manipulated and managed by the Presidential advisors, if not the top man himself, became painfully clear. Only then, in the aftermath of the dirty tricks campaign which isolated and defeated Muskie and Humphrey, and which took the full measure of Senator Eagleton, did the attitude of the Republican high command to the Democratic party—conceiving it as the Enemy and not simply the Opposition—become manifest. Only at this point, too late in time to reverse the Nixon landslide, did the Democratic party mobilize and articulate its concern over the future of democracy, no less than over the future of the party system as such.

Failure of the Left

A special tragedy in the Watergate aftermath is the inability of the American Left (presuming such a beast actually exists) to seize the moment to put a reasonable series of options before the American public. At a time when the need for fundamental political and economic reforms loomed large, when the American people could see concretely structural weaknesses in the American system of government, all the literary Left is able to come up with is a series of empty and tendentious platitudes about the evils of American capitalism. Just as the Right saw Watergate as a purifying agent within the World's Greatest System, the Left saw the same event as evidence that this is the World's Worst System.

As one shrewd political scientist, Edward Schnier, remarked recently in *transaction/Society*, the Watergate affair pointed up the weakness of a Left that was strictly ideological and lacking utopian capacities, that is, a Left which could criticize but not construct alternatives. If any evidence for this judgment were needed it is the Left's tragic inability to mobilize a single demonstration, spark a single mass form of protest or launch an impeachment movement. Instead, what occurred was the strange spectacle of moral indignation being registered by the stranded Republican minority, and political capital being made by the frustrated Democratic party majority. The Left remained outside and above the battle: taking two steps backward into abstraction as the American people struggled to take one step forward into specificity.

The Watergate hearings and their revelations on matters ranging from a rage against isolated anti-war protestors to extremely shady and sharp tax practices, have compelled Americans to confront a condition of political venality that can no longer be dismissed as the ravings of the radical fringe. But in the near-total silence of the Left, the impulse to reform gives way to the instinct of self-preservation. In this sense, Watergate is not a revolutionary spectacle of Marxian proportions, in which an exploiting economic class and its state machinery give way to mass uprisings and a new radical leadership as they did in the Bolshevik and Maoist revolutions. Rather, we witness a bizarre spectacle of Hobbesian proportions in which the ruling elite and state authority as such are rendered helpless by inner-party strife and intra-party rivalry.

Watergate has not elevated the Democratic party to virtue, nor relegated the Republican Party to vice. Yet, there is a dangerous precedent set in which the holders of state power are unwilling to abide by the premises and principles which have governed the United States for nearly 200 years. The present circumstances seem attuned to the English and French revolutions, in which aristocratic elites displayed precisely a collapse of class nerve and moral verve that created a leadership vacuum in which disenfranchised groups were compelled to seize power. The present intranquillity derives not so much from any doubt as to the authenticity of a crisis in the American Leviathan, but rather how this crisis will be resolved in the long pull of time, and what social forces will be unleashed capable of moving us beyond this malaise. The practical issue becomes: will the United States talk Left and move Right, and thus create a climate for a flourishing fascism, or will it be capable of restoring national confidence based upon an international cleansing or purge (there are no pleasant palliatives to describe the question of impeachment or removal of a President from high office) of the present holders of authority. Only one fact is certain: the present politics of centrism cannot be sustained amidst a climate of corruption and crisis.

As a result of this desultory performance on the part of the ideological Left, the Watergate affair threatens to be reduced to simply a matter of Republican party strategy, that is, conservative decision-making concerning the advisability or inadvisability of going with the President for the Congressional and state elections of 1974, and the Presidential elections of 1976; or moving toward a solid front behind Gerald Ford, the new Vice President. The choice becomes a conservative one: to "brazen it out" with Nixon, or "ride the new wave" with Ford. But either determination leaves the Left at the starting gate, without a program and without a vision. Thus, however important Watergate may be in relation to the structure of power in America, the absence of an organized Left with an historic vision and mission to

capitalize on such an event, means that this event becomes part of a deepening cycle of cynicism and anti-politics in America. It feeds, rather than destroys the revolutionary myths. It leads to a Hobbesian rather than a Marxian series of responses to the political turmoil. This means that those who praise order when they really worship terror have the most to gain by a scandal which in its origins and evolution should have held out the promise of a democratic response to terror.

Events, even important ones, are not self-evident in their political consequences. The tragic inability of the Left to capitalize on Watergate means that at best, the reform wing of the Democratic party will emerge with a newly born strength; at worst, Watergate will lead to a new style of fascism—less Platonic, less elitist but no less dangerous or virulent, since fascism also has been known to come in populist packages, wrapped in slogans celebrating integrity and integration. In short, Watergate does not alleviate the fear and trembling. Watergate proves that, even in America, politics does not stand still and that constitutions are not made for all eternity. However, Watergate also makes plain that the velocity of social change and political corruption may lead to something worse no less than something better. An era of turmoil may give birth to new beginnings, but it may also stir up ancient evils. This is a time for careful searching rather than careless celebrating, itself not a small lesson that Americans are finally beginning to understand.



MATT FIELD

AUTUMN OF A POLITICAL EXILE

Burning
exotic trees in Vietnam
rustle through your old dream
move still closer
whisper deep green
pleas before dying

Shouting
rich cranberry-bog scarlets
sumac and red maples
color your blood
feed painfully
all your severed roots

Pacing
the piazza in Florence
on neatly raked gravel
you brush crumpled
dry yellow leaves
of ancient plane-trees

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CHILDREN OF CAIN?

As tribal elders dealing with a miscreant, United States Senators, meeting without clothes so to speak, recently discussed and rendered a majority verdict in favor of restoring capital punishment to the land. Vengeance is mine, sayeth the Senate. Other assemblies in other times have similarly spoken, Seminal doings at the Olduvai Gorge and east of Lake Rudolf in Africa are not completely understood, or even agreed upon, but they suggest an appetite for both violence and weapon development is perhaps man's notable cultural attainment. Cultural anthropologists discuss such a premise within donnish Common Rooms of universities, in scientific journals and on the hustings where the Leakeys and Darts search for human beginnings—proto-hominids such as *Australopithecus* and *Kenyapithecus et al.* Theologians, too, whatever their skitterish views about “evolution,” emphasize the darker side of “human nature.”

Nor are politicians, as illustrated by the recent judgment of the Senate, strangers to discussions about man's daily violence toward his fellows. Their emphasis revolves around legislative penalties, sometimes fiendishly and gleefully described, that would reduce physical assaults against you and me. They place a lesser emphasis on, or even disregard of, physical harm by man-made institutions, such as that resulting from unsafe coal mines and poisonous substances in our food and our medicines. The same members of the United States Congress, who predictably argue that one can not/may not legislate social ills out of existence, also argue, equally predictably, that boiling murderers in oil will deter an unknown number of others from murder.

The most recent occasion for these vengeance-seekers occurred March 13. On the same date, but unrelated by the newspapers, there was a second similar occurrence. Late in the afternoon, the Senate by a vote of 54 to 33 agreed to reinstate the death penalty as punishment for serious offenses designed as crimes by federal law. A few hours later, a major television network offered a fictionalized account of the shooting of an American soldier convicted of desertion during World War II, “The Execution of Private Slovik.” The Senate action and the TV program differ in kind, but both flowed from an insistence that taking human life by civil or military authority is not only a justifiable action in retaliation for a violation of a specific law, but also is a deterrent against other Hauptmanns' kidnapping babies and other Sloviks' refusing combat duty.

The Senate allotted two days to discuss capital punishment. The bill before it was offered ostensibly in reply

to a Supreme Court decision in 1972, *Furman v. Georgia*. The Court by a 5-to-4 vote held that the death penalty, as then utilized, was unconstitutional because, as one Justice argued (Mr. Stewart), it was “so wantonly and freakishly imposed.” The Court's decision did not declare the death penalty per se unconstitutional, however.

The debate in the Senate had its grisly moments, stemming from amendments offered, and its humane moments, as evidenced by a speech of Senator Hughes (D-Iowa), who opposed the bill. Hughes, a huge, saturnine bear of a man who is leaving the Senate in order to become an evangelist, posed a moral question as the main speaker against the bill: “Is the morbid trip back to the death penalty the right way to go to protect society from violence. . . . I cannot be brought to believe that the way to conquer crime in America is to revert to institutional killings in the name of justice. . . . ‘Thou shalt not kill’ is the shortest of the Ten Commandments, uncomplicated by qualification or exception. . . . It is as clear and awesomely commanding as the powerful thrust of chain lightning out of a dark summer sky.”

Those in the Senate chamber were unusually attentive as Hughes continued: “Any qualified penologist will tell you that it is not the severity of the sentences that deters crime, but the swiftness and certainty of the punishment. . . . Finally, I oppose the death penalty because it is grossly destructive of human hopes for a society more amenable to peace and less dependent on violence for the solution of its problems. If we (i.e., the Senate) say death, then, in my judgment we have relinquished our responsibility for moral leadership at a time when it was never more desperately needed in our own troubled country and in a violence-prone world.”

The Senate, as Hughes phrased it, said “death” when it passed the bill the next day.

Representative of a majority opinion in favor of capital punishment was that expressed by Senator Bartlett of Oklahoma: “Society should be able to express its moral outrage at the most abominable crimes by providing that ultimate punishment.”

During the second, and final, day of debate Senator Buckley of New York rose to offer an amendment: “In no event shall a sentence of death be carried out upon a pregnant woman.” Not, of course, the Senator explained, did that “mean that no woman may be executed, but, rather, that the authorities would have to await delivery of her child before carrying out the sentence.”

"How soon after?" the Senator was reportedly asked in an informal discussion after his amendment was adopted 87 to 0. Immediately upon delivery? After a few hours' rest? After her body itself had healed from the effects of the childbirth? The response of the Senator, it was understood, was not precise. He justified his amendment on the grounds of "traditional, common-law rule that an unborn child shall not be made to suffer death on account of his or her mother's crime," Senator Buckley applied his "Right-to-Life" views toward fetuses but not to a physically fully developed adult to continue his or her life.

Later, Senator Hughes returned to the debate by offering an amendment designed to put into practice the concept of deterrence, repeatedly said by supporters of the bill to be a primary reason for sanctioning capital punishment. Hughes proposed public executions. His amendment read: "... the United States marshal charged with the execution of any sentence of death shall take such action as may be necessary to cause such execution to be carried out in public. The United States marshal shall make available to all such communication facilities and media, including radio and television, opportunities as may be necessary to assure the widest possible exposure of such execution to the public, and shall carry out such execution at a time most likely to provide such exposure."

This Hughes amendment, after brief argument, was defeated overwhelmingly—81 against and only 10 in favor (Senators Abourezk, Clark, Hart, Hughes himself, Inouye, Kennedy, McGovern, Proxmire, Tunney and Weicker).

Final passage of the capital-punishment bill found proponents and opponents dividing neither on a basis of party nor on the basis of conventional "conservative" or "liberal" views. Several Senators, customarily responsive to legislative remedies for the baser and brutal side of human life, be it in Vietnam or the domestically dispossessed, voted for the bill—those such as Senators Bayh, Chiles, Church, Haskell, Ribicoff and Schweiker. All except Chiles and Haskell are candidates for re-election this year, which could account for their rock 'em/sock 'em vote, which sent the bill to the House of Representatives for anticipated approval there. If enacted into law, the statute would stand in contrast to actions by more than 40 nations that have abolished capital punishment during the last 50 years. Furthermore, it makes far less likely that the eight-years' absence of execution for a person convicted of a capital offense in the United States shall be extended.

And the Senate action dovetailed with the story of Eddie Slovik televised that evening.

Approximately ten million Americans were inducted into the military service during the Second World War. Of these, an estimated four-tenths of one percent—or 40,000 military personnel—were declared deserters.

Forty-nine of these 40,000 were found, tried and sentenced to death. Slovik, an infantryman in the 28th Division, was one of these 49 and only he was actually put to death—executed on January 31, 1945 in France by an official firing-squad of a dozen men. In Slovik's case, unlike the Senate action, his conviction was unanimously agreed upon by the general court-martial. His conviction, accompanied by a sentence of death, was reviewed right up to General Eisenhower, top commander in the European Theatre.

Slovik, of course, did not kill anyone—the topic of the Senate action. Indeed, he refused, under the official imprimatur of government, to serve in a capacity that might lead to his killing another soldier of a country with which we were at war.

But a similarity exists. A majority of the Senate acts, making it an action of the full Senate, by declaring that ultimately a convicted murderer, in stipulated categories of homicide, shall be himself murdered with official sanction. The Army through its court-martial and review procedure decided, on the eve of a major invasion of Nazi Germany, that one man, among others who had acted similarly, shall be murdered, likewise with official sanction.

As Senator Hughes said during the debate, there are statistics and opinions on both sides of the question of whether or not legalized public killing is a deterrent to an infantryman who would desert. But, Hughes told his colleagues, "the death penalty demeans society without protecting it. . . . Or, as G.B. Shaw phrased it: "Murder and capital punishment are not opposites that cancel one another, but similars that breed their kind."

Of course, there is a dilemma that civil and military (and religious) authorities point to. They seem to be saying that there are times when they act in a specific circumstance because their agents, although knowing that wrong may be being done, nevertheless believe there is no practical alternative. Frightening.

Those in authority, that is, the immediate superiors of Slovik, members of his court-martial board and his jailers, saw him as hapless and even well-meaning. Perhaps, they hoped or anticipated that a higher authority than theirs would over-rule his sentence. It didn't happen. The "Organization" demanded his death and they acquiesced. One may be victimized, as well as enhanced by beliefs of a group—in one case, the Senate, and in the other, the Army.

Notably, though, it is the chaplain, the Roman Catholic priest in military uniform of his country, who protests against the fate of Slovik until the moment of the firing of the rifles by the execution squad. Yet he engages himself in the religious preparations of the condemned prisoner.

"I believe more and more," Van Gogh wrote, "that God must not be judged on this earth. It is one of His sketches that has turned out badly."

SISYPHUS

THE SCREEN

It is important not to be put off by *Lucia* at first. This new Cuban film—new to us though made in the 1960s—tells the stories of three different women named Lucia living in Cuba in different historical epochs. And the episode dealing with the first epoch is in many ways the hardest to take, the hardest to imagine an artistic rationale for. It is so melodramatic. It deals with a young woman born into a rich family and cursed with a hopeless romanticism. In 1895, at a time when Spain is trying to purge Cuba of native insurgents, Lucia (Raquel Revuelta) falls in love with a Spaniard who seduces her into betraying a hiding place of the rebels, her own brother among them. As a consequence her brother is killed, and she is so distraught she stabs her lover to death.

Though this plot is already melodramatic enough in itself, the treatment given to it by director Humberto Solas reinforces that melodrama on virtually every level. Because her lover is married, Lucia proposes that they run away to her father's coffee plantation. She naively believes that there the two of them can escape from society into some sempiternal idyll, but what she finds at the plantation is the opposite: the reality of Cuba's future working itself out in a guerrilla war between the rebels and Spanish mercenaries. This "reality" is also pretty fanciful, however. The rebels, for instance, are a band of muscular blacks fighting and riding on horseback stark naked. It is not Lucia alone who is romanticizing and idealizing here. In this first episode, *Lucia* has a sub-plot about a maddened hag who is reputed to have been a nun raped while offering spiritual comfort to dying men on the battlefield. Hers is really a penny-dreadful story, and Solas makes it appropriately horrific with flashy camera work and solarized photography. Yet the nun's story is also clearly intended as an analogue to Lucia's story, for which it sets the tone.

But in the next episode the tone changes, and does so in a way that makes us reevaluate the first episode. We begin to realize that the significance of events in this film, like that of events in history, only reveals itself in the long run. In the second episode, set in 1933, Lucia (Eslinda Nunez) is a middle-class girl who leaves her parents to marry an urban terrorist fighting against the Machado regime. She joins him in the revolutionary struggle, and together they eventually see Machado's fall. But things afterwards are no better, so Lucia's husband soon resorts to the machine gun again to oppose the new regime.

In this episode there are no fancy photographic effects because there are no romantic illusions to project. Where

the first Lucia has fantasies—even the rape of the nun is a fantasy sequence, realized from gossip at a sewing bee—this second Lucia has memories. She narrates her own story while sitting at her work in a tobacco factory sometime after most of the events have occurred. The only cinematic technique being employed now is the flashback. Moreover, there is little melodrama in the real experiences with which her life supplants the romantic dreams of her predecessor. Rather than being some sort of Spanish revenge tragedy, this Lucia's life approaches a genuine tragedy, one we can take seriously, when her husband is futilely killed and she must go to identify the body.

The revolution fought by Lucia and her husband has in general been a series of bad risks and near catastrophes. When Lucia first meets him, he is recuperating from a wound, and another woman warns her before she marries that she will face many more, bloody, late-night arrivals. For her own part, an act as trivial as scribbling a few slogans in the washroom at work becomes a dangerous gesture. The whole struggle seems so pathetic. When her husband ambushes some policemen, guns jam, shots go astray, and no one dies easily or pointedly on either side. Even when Machado is actually overthrown, we have little sense that Lucia and the others have brought this about. Holed up and hurting as usual after the attack on the police, the revolutionaries hear a commotion outside and open the windows to news of the dictator's overthrow. No one is more surprised than they.

With the third episode which is set in the 1960s, the gamut being run from rich women to poor and from melodrama to comedy is completed. All three Lucias live their lives much of the time closed up in shuttered rooms. The first Lucia does so out of propriety, the second out of impropriety, as it were, because she and her husband are hiding from the authorities. But each Lucia is really trying to break out of her shuttered confinement, and the third Lucia (Adela Legra) is no different. In her case the shutters, and the door, have literally been nailed up by her husband, who has a bad *macho* problem. The whole revolutionary struggle whose seventy-year history we have been watching finally comes down to this: the attempt by an illiterate peasant girl to get out from under the oppression of her husband.

In effect this is the revolution. It is to give this girl the courage and the right to defy her husband that the other Lucias suffer violence, betrayal and bereavement. Mr. Solas has not glorified the fighting (or included Castro's decisive campaigns at all) because it is not in the drama of the military operations, but in the domestic comedy which comes after, that the revolution is truly won or lost. At the end it is not yet settled what the outcome will be. Like the other Cuban film that has premiered recently in this country, Alea's *Memories of Underdevelopment*, which ends in the midst of the Cuban missile crisis, *Lucia* ends before the battle is over. Lucia

and her husband are in the final scene wrestling and shouting on a beach (the Bay of Pigs?), trying to reach an understanding whereby she can bear to live with him.

In the end, then, *Lucia* has a very large and extraordinary historical perspective. It is a film about the ways in which history raises the level of consciousness and makes revolution inevitable. Accordingly, *Lucia* is also made from the vantage point provided by the level of consciousness that exists in each historical epoch it deals with. If the film represents the Cuban revolutionary of 1895 as a naked black warrior, it is only because that is

the way in which the rebels of that age saw themselves. What is at first hard to fathom about this film is that Mr. Solas has indeed been guided by such historical considerations. He is not the filmmaker we are accustomed to in a capitalist society—the alienated artist trying to create a work perfect in itself, a work that reflects only the impeccable sensibilities of the artist in his isolation. Mr. Solas sees what he is doing as something that has a wider responsibility to a whole national history, and he tempers his art to his responsibilities.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

WHEN I asked the generous editors of *Commonweal* whether they would care to have a review of the Marcel Duchamp show then on view at the Philadelphia Museum, I received a “yes” of notably measured enthusiasm with the admonition to remember that not many of the readers of this periodical would be likely to see the show. Just the thing—if ever there was an exhibition for not seeing this is it! No, that is not a negative comment on the man who has been called the Granddada of modern art; it is a comment on the fact that one doesn’t go to see a Duchamp exhibit, if for no other reason than the fact that there really isn’t very much to see at all.

The last (of few) exhibits of Duchamp’s works in America prior to his death was at the Cordier and Ekstrom Gallery in New York and was called *Not Seen and/or Less Seen of/by Marcel Duchamp/Rose Selavy*. (Rose—fr. *arroser*: to water, spray, baste; *C’est la vie* was a Duchampian pseudonym.) Indeed, not seen and less seen of or by Marcel Duchamp must be the descriptive title of any exhibit because Duchamp produced almost—almost—nothing between the super-notorious “Nude Descending a Staircase” of the Armoury show in 1913 and his death in a Paris studio fifty-five years later. Thus, dear reader, do not feel disadvantaged that *Commonweal* is not fiscally up to a four-page color-spread as accompaniment to this commentary.

DENNIS O'BRIEN, a frequent contributor to these pages, is Dean of Middlebury College in Vermont.

NUDE DESCENDING THE PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM

DENNIS O'BRIEN

Appealing to minds, not eyes

Imagine to yourself a blank page and we can begin.

To tell the truth, Duchamp did in fact definitively incomplete (his terminology) two major objects after 1913. These “works” have been enormously influential but they also count as part of the unseen. The better known of the objects is “The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even” or “The Large Glass” on which he “acted” intermittently from 1913 to 1923. (To say that Duchamp “worked” on this project, “busied himself” at it, “labored” over it seems most inappropriate to the intermittent attention which it received and to an artist who preferred to call himself *un respirateur*. For all that, he was an extraordinarily meticulous craftsman.)

After the “Large Glass,” Duchamp evidently stopped making altogether except for some paper cut-outs, and occasional metaphysical and erotic practical jokes. Nevertheless, it was in this period of apparent inactivity that Duchamp became a virtual cult hero for

certain artists. And it was the *inactivity* which was influential. Octavio Paz writes: “Perhaps the two painters who have had the greatest influence on our century are Pablo Picasso and Marcel Duchamp. The former by his works; the latter by a single work which is nothing less than the negation of work in the modern sense of the word. The transformations that Picasso’s painting has gone through . . . have astonished consistently for a period of more than fifty years; Duchamp’s inactivity is no less astonishing and, in its way, fruitful.” (“*Marcel Duchamp or the Castle of Purity*,” Paz’s slim essay on Duchamp is an unusually insightful and profound commentary on the artist and on art in the twentieth century.) Yet this inactivity of the later years turned out to be but another irony from the supreme ironist of twentieth century art. Following his death, it was revealed that Duchamp and his wife had been preparing in deepest secrecy for twenty years a monumental object entitled “Given: 1. The Waterfall, 2. The Illu-

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minating Gas." This object is now permanently housed with most of the Duchamp materials in the Philadelphia Museum.

Must I retract my promise that illustrations are out of order for a review of Duchamp? Not entirely. Insofar as Paz is correct, and he is, that Duchamp's non-work is in a sense his important contribution, I need no grave to show what is not. Then what there *is*, remains largely unseeable. "The Bride" is a "large glass," approximately six feet by eight feet and if it weren't for the fact that at one stage it was accidentally smashed to bits and had to be glued back together (by the artist himself who thought it much improved the whole idea) most of the surface area would be transparently invisible. (There is an intricately drafted mechanic-organic design which constitutes the bride and her bachelors on the glass—but it is mostly glass.)

"Given" is unseen in yet another way. (When I saw the show in Philadelphia it was definitely unseen since it is tucked away in an alcove and very few people seemed to realize it even existed. Duchamp would have been delighted.) In keeping with the unseeable character of Duchamp's basic artistic gesture, "Given" can only be viewed through two tiny peepholes in a weatherbeaten rustic door which Duchamp purchased in Spain. What one sees through the peephole is an actual brick wall with a hole in it, through the hole a female figure in an uncompromisingly erotic pose whose head is invisible because of the angle of vision. The figure lies on a bed of real twigs, holding on high a gas lamp in her left hand, in the background is a cheap postcard-style painted background with an artificial waterfall effect created by a moving light. No photograph exists of this scene behind the door; I am not sure that it would be technically possible to produce one; and given the eroticism of the thing, I am not sure that a high-minded periodical would care to show such matters. So, the two major Duchamp works after "Nude Descending a Staircase" resist being seen, remaining transparent, only to be peeped at,

blocking vision, resisting visual reproduction, being pornographic enough to suggest they ought not to be seen.

So much for the fact that Duchamp makes a reputation by not making or by crafting what is only marginally visible, there is one more facet of Duchamp which must be noted before I try to puzzle out the moral of this curious tale. Beside the not-made and the barely-made, the Duchamp show also comprises "the ready-made." In 1917, Duchamp created yet another artistic scandal by submitting to the Society of Independent Artists for exhibition a urinal, lying demurely on its back with the title "Fountain" and signed by the artist, one "R. Mutt." This gesture had been preceded by such subsequently famous items as *In Advance of a Broken Arm* (1915)—a snow shovel, *Bottlerack* (1914)—a rack for drying wine bottles, *Traveler's Folding Item* (1916)—an Underwood typewriter cover.

Anyone reasonably familiar with contemporary art can certainly see the traces of Duchamp in the work of various underground and avant-garde artists. (The distinction is important: as Edward Lucie-Smith points out, the notion of an avant-garde assumes that eventually taste will catch up, the idea of "underground" suggests a permanent subversive position for art.) Andy Warhol's soup cans obviously follow the tradition of the ready-made. The contemporary art world is crowded with the unseen and unseeable "art" objects. Christo wraps public monuments so that they can't be seen; if you wrap something large enough like an Australian cliff you can't even see the whole *wrapping* and if you do it where the wind currents are sufficiently vicious it will all be destroyed immediately anyhow. What was once thought pornographically unseeable is very much on view. I recently saw in a very chic gallery in Montreal the plastically preserved droppings of a guinea pig's cage appropriately entitled "The Bride and the Bachelors." Not exactly what Vasari had in mind when he attempted to elevate the status of artists because of *disegno, grazia, iudizio* and *decoro*.

Well, what *are* we supposed to make of a collection of shovels, postcards, chessmen, pieces of glass, notes, erotica—(and a large number of pre-1913 painting in various styles?) Is it all an elaborate joke on Vasari and the museum-goer? Why, yes. Of course it is a joke but not idle jest.

The Duchamp exhibit has now moved on from Philadelphia to the Museum of Modern Art and will conclude at the Art Institute of Chicago in late spring. I would definitely recommend missing it at MOMA. The comic, ironic and blasphemous overtones of the Duchamp exhibit were inescapable in Philadelphia in a way they are not likely to be at the Modern in New York. The latter is, after all, a distinctly *au courant* building—lots of glass—and it is full of those strange objects which we all recognize as distinctly modern. The Philadelphia Museum on the other hand is the most outrageously elaborated Greco-Roman revival building imaginable. One of the architects for the edifice telegraphed from Greece at one stage in the planning: "Have seen Parthenon approve museum design." If one can imagine a cabled version of the Parthenon translated into ten acres of pure Minnesota dolomite, that is the Philadelphia Museum. In order to get to the Duchamp exhibit it was necessary to wander through yards of dolomite and much of the history of art. Having circled round a Van der Weyden "Christ on the Cross" and through galleries of swimming impressionist color, one finally arrived at the Duchamp show and there, exhibited with all the care for space and lighting reserved to a Bruges Madonna were the hat rack, the shovel, the urinal and so on. (Note: not *the* urinal, the original is lost and this is a modern edition. *Ars brevis, vita longa*.) Isn't that something in the range from blasphemy to silliness?

Blasphemy to what? To museums indeed. We are all used to seeing beautiful and crafted objects in museums. They should be colorful, rich, well made, well seen. And here in the corner of this archetypically ornate traditional museum are all these ready-

made, barely-made, unseen, unseeable and unspeakable objects. Not the Mona Lisa but a postcard litho of the same with a penciled mustache. *These* objects shouldn't be in a museum. Correct, again. And neither should the Van der Weyden altar piece or the Bruges Madonna. The real effect of the Duchamp exhibit may well come, as it came for me, after leaving the actual exhibit and wandering the halls given over to the *other* displaced objects which make up a museum collection. Here is an altar screen, there a family portrait, there a piece of a Hindu temple, the writing table of a Chinese scholar. Almost nothing in the bulk of the Philadelphia Museum's collection was made to be *seen* any more than the urinal was made to be seen. Of course, they were seen but what was important about them was what was unseen—a life, a worship, a family pride in which they lived and functioned. In contrast, the objects in the Museum of Modern Art come from a period when art was intended *only* to be seen. Modern art until the very recent past has been defined by an assumed aesthetic of art for the sake of art. It produces everything from the beauties of impressionism, to modern post-painterly abstraction which seems both in style and size to be destined for museum life alone. And, depending on whether you prefer Marx right side up or on his head, the economics of the art market have followed in perfect parallel a life for art objects confined to the gallery dealer and the museum curator.

Duchamp often stated his opposition to "retinal painting" which he saw coming to the fore with Courbet. He wanted a painting which appealed to the mind, not to the eye. "The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even" is not only unseen in the sense that the intricate shapes swim in spaces of invisible glass, there is also a box of notes that are supposed to be riffled through while looking at the work. These are the ideas which accompany the seen object. This is Duchamp's way of saying that as the altarpiece existed in a life of unseen ideas, so with the glass.

But Duchamp is not a prophet or theologian with a system. The ideas in "The Green Box" are mere fragments which only suggest that more is needed than meets the eye. The trouble with retinal painting is not that it uses paints and appeals to the eye, it is that it accepts that as a completed gesture. Art for art's sake in the nineteenth and twentieth century has made the artist a genius, a prophet, a saint—Duchamp preferred to be merely a breather. "Art as religion," Duchamp said to an interviewer, "—it is not even as good as God."

Duchamp is the grand heresiarch of the religion of culture. Museums are after all "temples of culture" for many who find the other churches full of distasteful plaster saints and plastic sermons. But can a museum be more than a graceful decorous mausoleum? The collection's totems and pots, paintings and porcelain all emerged from a total life of dealing and doing that the museum reduces to merely being seen. Past art has lived on what was unseen—on the beliefs and deeds that made the seen significant. So, Duchamp reminds us that art lives beyond what is on view in a museum. He gives us things we cannot view; he gives us things like urinals and snow shovels that drag their real life with them. Despite the tasteful mounting they refuse to be objects of art just as the crucifix in the medieval gallery should also refuse the museum-mortician's smothering politeness.

Duchamp was extremely interested in seeing that his works were preserved and collected. His friends, the Arensbergs, dutifully bought up what they could and donated it all permanently to Philadelphia. It is *the* proper location. It is a marvelous gesture for the Philadelphians to harbor this French saboteur. If his vision of the invisible

life of art finally subverts the institution in Fairmount Park, it would be a wonderful place in which to roller skate. Contemplating the destruction of art museums is not a barbarian gesture. As Octavio Paz remarks: "Duchamp is against the Museum, not against the Cathedral; against the 'collection,' not against an art which is founded on life."

Duchamp actively non-produced works of art—a difficult gesture, one must be the creator of "Nude Descending a Staircase" before all this inactivity can prove so effective. What he produced when collected cannot really be seen, the works when seen cannot be contained in the "retinal" act, they keep escaping into their dubious past, low taste, jumbles of ideas and erotic fantasy. Apollinaire said long ago that Duchamp would restore the proper relation between art and life. Duchamp was often asked about this remark and he steadfastly averred that Apollinaire was a bit lightheaded and would say anything that came into his mind. In a sense Apollinaire may have hit upon a truth. Certainly Duchamp disliked the whole divorce from life which the bourgeois, museum-oriented, art-for-art's-sake culture suggests. He admired with nostalgia the religious painters of the Renaissance. But restore relation between art and life? No, that is not the gesture for the artist which is what Duchamp finally remains. If art and life are not properly related today the problem is not a problem of art and the artist, it is a problem of life. One does not save life *through* art, life must save itself and then find an art to proclaim that salvation. Twentieth century life creates no Madonnas, and when Art offers herself as Holy Mother, Duchamp suggests "the bride stripped bare by her bachelors, even."



JOHN FANDEL

ADDRESS

Ah, sprouter, greenly inching, strongly slight,
You show me all I ought to know, and might.

5 April 1974: 112

De GAULLE IN INSTANT BIOGRAPHY

QUINCY HOWE

De Gaulle

BRIAN CROZIER

Scribners, \$12.50

Instant history is one thing, instant biography another. The accelerating pace of events has compelled more and more journalists to write more and more instant history. But that same acceleration compels the biographer—whether instant or definitive—to proceed more slowly: events happen so fast that they distract from the human element or obscure it. Brian Crozier—born in Australia and educated in France—has poured forth more than his share of instant history. During and since the Second World War he has served as foreign correspondent and editorial writer for the London *Economist*, broadcast for the B.B.C., and written eight books on contemporary affairs and collaborated on three more. His publisher describes this volume as “the first complete biography” of de Gaulle. It appears within four years of de Gaulle’s death, thus qualifying as instant biography.

Mr. Crozier devotes the first 108 of his book’s 686 pages to the first forty years of de Gaulle’s life. Here is biography at its best, summarizing and illuminating de Gaulle’s long and varied apprenticeship from informal home education, formal instruction at a Jesuit preparatory school in Belgium, attendance at the Saint Cyr Military Academy, and spanning his first twenty-one formative years as an officer in the French Army. He spent the first two years of the First World War fighting on the western front where he was three times wounded, left for dead at Verdun, and dragged off by German troops to thirty-two months as a prisoner of war. In 1920, he served under General Weygand at the Battle of War-

saw; in 1923 Marshal Petain endorsed his heretical views on offensive mobile warfare which he applied in 1940 as a tank commander, winning a brigadier general’s two stars and appointment by Premier Reynaud to accompany a special mission to England in June.

The next three hundred pages of his book Mr. Crozier devotes to the five and a half years between the fall of France in June, 1940, to de Gaulle’s resignation as first Premier of the Fourth French Republic in January, 1946. Sustained by Churchill’s faith and his own, de Gaulle transcended himself as the physical embodiment of an immortal France. As Churchill always knew and as Roosevelt could never understand, de Gaulle could not have claimed less without abandoning his unique, historic role. Thirty years on, some of de Gaulle’s wartime pretensions appear dubious, but it is not going to take another thirty years for the reappraisals of some of his wartime critics to call for revision in their turn. The instant historian accepts, as an occupational hazard, the tendency of history to reverse itself. But the instant biographer must cope with more than an occupational hazard. He must project a complete and credible human being, not an abstract historical process.

The detailed treatment that Mr. Crozier applies to de Gaulle’s transcendent role as the liberator of France does not match his shorter and clearer treatment of de Gaulle’s first forty years. And the final two hundred pages that Mr. Crozier devotes to de Gaulle’s career between 1946 and his death in 1970 demonstrates, among other things, that so eventful a period and so complex a man simply do not lend themselves to instant, biographical treatment. The best that can be said of his effort is that it reflects the chaos it describes.

Throughout the book Mr. Crozier

recognizes, respects, and accepts de Gaulle’s addiction to paradox, irony, even cynicism. He depicts de Gaulle as “a peerless showman and myth-maker,” “a holy monster or magician who transcends normal capacities and ambitions,” “an illusionist or magician, adept at creating a sense of achievement when nothing, in fact has been done.” “Among the many paradoxes of de Gaulle is that he symbolized for some authority and legitimacy and for others glory and adventure.” As he himself explained: “Cunning must be used to make people believe that one is what one is not, that one wants what one does not want.” In 1961 he boasted, “I myself shall bring Communism to France, to avoid Communism and its totalitarianism.” But in the end, even his own rhetoric failed him. Like his biographer and many of his associates, de Gaulle could never grasp the not so simple truth that history in the twentieth century moves at accelerating speed.

De Gaulle made no mistake, in 1946, when he turned over the Fourth French Republic to the same “regime of politicians” that had nibbled the Third Republic to death. He also displayed wisdom and restraint in waiting until 1958 to accept the invitation extended by President Coty and other leaders of the Fourth Republic to preside over the peaceful liquidation of their regime and to install, in its place, a Fifth Republic with a Presidential regime, tailored to fit his own specifications.

Having spent the late spring, summer, and early fall of 1958 installing the Fifth Republic in place of the Fourth, de Gaulle required another two years to complete the more difficult task of ending the Algerian War by granting Algeria its independence. But no sooner had he set himself up as President of the Fifth Republic than he

liquidated the remains of the pre-war French colonial empire. Between mid-October and mid-December, 1958, twelve former French possessions chose to accept independence as States of the French Community while five others chose to remain Overseas Territories of the French Republic. De Gaulle had thus carved a special place for France among the developing nations of the Third World while at the same time ending the French Army's threat of civil war in connection with the Algerian settlement.

"I've come back ten years too late," de Gaulle confided to his doctor in 1958 and to some of his Companions of the Liberation he remarked, "I'm the man of 1940. I'm twenty years too old to face up to destiny." But the man of 1940 had become the man of 1958, in connection with the French colonial empire, and the man of 1962, in connection with Algeria. Again de Gaulle had transcended himself and performed services for his country of which none of his compatriots was capable, and while Mr. Crozier may tend to underestimate these unique services, he has found it impossible, in his chosen role of instant biographer, to appraise the

consequences of de Gaulle's foreign policies on that part of the world to which both de Gaulle and his biographer attach prime importance: Europe and the Atlantic Community.

Because de Gaulle always acted as if France enjoyed honorary superpower status, he was able to bring off one major miracle during the Second World War and two vital ones afterward. But during the decade of the 1960s the accelerations of history overtook and destroyed him. As of the mid-1970s, de Gaulle emerges in this instant biography as an essentially tragic figure. For Mr. Crozier's final chapters not only stress the unbroken record of diplomatic disasters that de Gaulle suffered in his policies toward Germany and Russia, Britain and the United States, the Common Market and the United Nations. He also traces these disasters to the premises that de Gaulle learned from his wartime experiences. History's ironies for which de Gaulle had such a sharp eye in appraising fates of others finally caught up with him, fortified by the accelerations of history which he had chosen to ignore.

Tales from Eternity: The World of Fairytales and the Spiritual Search

ROSEMARY HAUGHTON

Seabury, \$6.95

SALLIE TESELLE

Rosemary Haughton is a very interesting theologian and *Tales from Eternity* is surely one of her most interesting books. If I were to "place" it, I suppose it belongs, in terms of sensibility, with the fantasy works of that extraordinary group of Englishmen—Charles Williams, C. S. Lewis, George MacDonald, J. R. R. Tolkien—though it also has affinities with a more mystical tradition where the main concern is "spiritual direction"—Thomas Merton and Simone Weil. But it's more complicated still since *Tales from Eternity* is not a fairy-tale, but a book about fairy-tales; moreover, along with the fantasy and mystical writers, the extremist stand, both personally and

politically, of Bonhoeffer and Berrigan rates high with her.

Having made an effort, then to put the book in some sort of context, let's turn to the more interesting question of its own contribution. Her assumption, which initially I rejected but eventually came to embrace, is that the worlds of the fairy-tale and of the Gospel are strangely similar. Both involve a radical reversal of ordinary, customary values and ways of living, and in both of them the powerful and knowledgeable are brought low while the humble and simple persevere to the end, in the one case, to winning the princess and in the other, to winning the kingdom. A very interesting thesis, though Ms. Haughton allows that this "theology" is not self-evident in the fairy-tales; her reading is from a perspective, a Christian perspective, and what this perspective does is help us, via the fairy-tales, to come back to the Gospel.

With these words I have hinted at the central project of *Tales from Eternity*: "fairy tales can open our minds to the human, and make us able to hear more sharply the demand for the transformation of the human into its own completeness in Christ" (p. 15). In other words, the fairy-tale concentrates on "natural" human life—its depths and mysteries—while the Gospel goes further, showing how the natural man or woman is redeemed. Ms. Haughton does not speak in the traditional nature-grace language, but that ancient and, to my mind, profound distinction underlies much of



REVIEWERS

QUINCY HOWE, a distinguished radio commentator for many years, wrote *Ashes of Victory* (Simon & Schuster).

SALLIE TESELLE, an assistant professor of theology at Vanderbilt Divinity School, is the author of *Literature and the Christian Life*.

KRISTINE M. ROSENTHAL teaches in the sociology department at Brandeis. A consultant and field coordinator for the Abt Day Care Study, she is the mother of three.



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the book. It allows her to take the fairy-tales as they are and for what they say without forcing them into Christian molds—they are, she says, “the distillation of vintage human wisdom,” “the basic facts of human nature.” That’s nice, relaxed and non-programmatic about the relation between the human and the Christian. However, the distinction also allows her to insist on transformation of the human, and it is a very radical transformation which she envisions—nothing short of the kind of radical discipleship of Bonhoeffer’s *Cost of Discipleship* where the words “foolish” and “obedient” are dominant.

Now for some specifics. The book is divided into six chapters, each one dealing with a major fairy-tale motif, and the motifs together suggest (or as Ms. Haughton says, allow us to smell, taste, and feel, rather than just hear) the spiritual qualities a Christian needs for his or her journey. This is an important point: she is not just dealing under her chapter headings “The Youngest Son,” “Wise Animals,” “The Real Princess,” “Witches, Emperors and Ogres,” “The Quest,” and “Happy Ever After,” with interesting fairy-tale themes. Rather, each theme is a “parable” or intimation of an aspect of the Christian vocation. In other words, a Christian is always the youngest son who should listen to the wise animals, aware of the witches and ogres (against which he or she needs the magic and wisdom of the princess) in the quest to be obedient to the end. In essence, the book is the unpacking of that sentence, though Ms. Haughton builds toward it in a very subtle and engaging way.

The theme I found most provocative is “The Youngest Son.” The youngest son in the fairy-tales is usually the fool and the dreamer, who is socially and sometimes intellectually inferior to his elder, worldly-wise brothers. But he is also gentle and compassionate, a picaresque saint type found in many contemporary novels (*Catch-22*, *The Power and the Glory*, *Cry the Beloved Country*, *Little Big Man*). The youngest son, who of

course is also the Prodigal Son and, pre-eminently, Christ, is Ms. Haughton’s central category: “Each Christian is the youngest son, ill-equipped, ignorant, liable to make hair-raising mistakes and to suffer for them, but upheld by the knowledge that he is

sent” (p. 39). The youngest son, humbled, vulnerable and foolish is, nonetheless, faithful, hanging in there to the end. Ms. Haughton has a light touch here (which is not always the case in the book): “The perseverance [of the youngest son] is not the result

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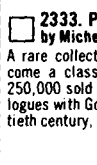
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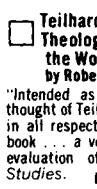
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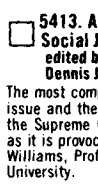
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The other chapters fill in the journey and the equipment for the journey needed by the youngest son. It is interesting to see what Ms. Haughton does with the masculine-feminine issue under "The Real Princess." She insists that a male vs. female division is incorrect: we are *each* the youngest son who needs the feminine side of human nature, which, interestingly, is not soft and nurturing. Rather, the real princess has a strong sense of purpose and conviction of responsibility for the welfare of another, is an opportunist, is wise, and lays her plans carefully. Nevertheless, the feminine side is in a "helping" relation to the masculine side—it was ever thus.

I have concentrated on what I like about *Tales from Eternity* (why not? it's too easy and doesn't benefit me or you much to do otherwise). But I feel obliged to say that Ms. Haughton is often "preachy" and her analogies between the fairy-tales and the Christian life are sometimes strained. One of her ostensible concerns in the book is to remedy the ecological crisis—presumably the youngest son qualities of openness and non-possessiveness will restore a balance between the human and natural worlds. I'm not convinced by either her analysis or solution and she often gets "heavy." The strain in the analogies, for instance, is evident when she identifies fairy-tale ogres with "General Motors, the Supreme Soviet, I.C.I., the Bunny Clubs, the Home Office, the Pentagon or, to be thoroughly traditional, the old-style Vatican" (p. 108). Or when she says that the "true princess" in each Christian is the ability to feel the pea through the twenty mattresses, i.e., "we can then realize that the vocation of the real princess requires her to be aware of, and hurt by, symptoms of evil in a way that people who lack the doubtful pleasure of the royal vocation need not be" (p. 83). Maybe, but it sounds to me like a Sunday School lesson.

Obviously, though, I like this book. It is a refreshing kind of theological reflection, one in keeping, I believe, with the story form of Scripture. It is

an aid toward clarification of basic Christian concepts but in a way that does not permit abstraction from personal and political concerns. Like the parables of Jesus, the fairy-tales hold in solution the concrete and the general, the personal and the social, the particular and the universal. "Everyone loves a good story": both Scripture and fairy-tales know this, they know that our lives are stories and that stories address us as nothing else can.

Who's Minding the Children?: The History and Politics of Day Care in America

MARGARET O'BRIEN STEINFELS

Simon & Schuster, \$8.95

KRISTINE M. ROSENTHAL

At every point in history and in every society, or simply always and everywhere, women—and sometimes men—took care of children other than their own. Cousins and maiden aunts, grandparents, maids and the people next door, all provided "day care" for mothers who by dint of other responsibilities, or privilege of status, had limited their participation in the care and rearing of their children.

The Victorian household, that bulwark of family virtue, traditionally contained an upstairs nursery presided over by an ever-present nanny, which to all intents functioned as a small "center." Contact between these upper-class children and their parents was often no more than a formal daily visit (witness the Nicholsons' distanced but substantial letters to their children). Early years ended, the male child was generally shipped off to boarding school returning only for occasional holidays. The working-class version of child care included care by siblings, relatives, or neighbors (if available) and an early apprenticeship away from home.

Now, these arrangements were viewed as an *extension* of parental authority and not as its *abdication*. Child care then was a family issue and more-or-less under family control. Today, with

much confusion, it has become very much a public issue.

With *Who's Minding the Children*, Ms. Steinfels has gone a long way towards finally clearing the air and helping us sort things out and through. In down-to-earth narrative prose she provides us with a detailed history of day care from its beginnings to the present. She has investigated the logistics of management; observed day care in (varied) operation; summarized the observations of others (from Anna Freud to contemporary Feminists); and has done extensive interviews with mothers to concretely set before us what it is like to organize and use day care.

Her material makes quite explicit the basic conflict of day care ideology, namely, day care as an attempt to compensate for the "failure" and "inadequacy" of certain families which the community sees or deems as unable or unfit to care for their own children, as opposed to day care as supportive and complimentary to the childrens' own families.

This conflict continues to be expressed at every level of concern and is intimately connected to all aspects of day-care. It is evident in the ambiguities of attempts at parent-controlled day care. And it is most highly evident in the response to the Mondale-Brademas bill which Congress passed in December 1971 providing for comprehensive child care to be available to *all* children, with a budget up to two billion dollars. The bill was vetoed by the President who, in voicing a concern that "family centered" approaches to child rearing would be replaced by "community centered" approaches, both clouded and accentuated the conflict. That is, beyond partisan politics, cost, and elections, have "family" and "community" lost all normative meaning? And if they have, who decides? the President? university professors? discrete communities?

Perhaps the interest of the community is no longer synonymous with interest of the family. Nor does the interest of the family seem to necessarily correspond to the interest of the individual. Whether we approve or no, we live

in a society which more and more emphasizes the rights of the individual, and as Ms. Steinfels points out in her concluding chapter, these individualist values have had the effect of weakening parental authority and influence while "substituting for it an unthought-out set of economic and social values." Thus the "crisis" of American family with no agreement upon its "solution."

She states that one of the major causes of the withdrawal of the family from the larger community has been the disorder and insecurity caused by the "strange customs" of the newcomers to 19th century American cities. One might well ask, however, whether it was their strange customs that made them unacceptable or their *poverty*. Wasn't it their poverty that made them "unfit" parents and their children eligible for day care, yet—a further irony—that that poverty was exploited and maintained by the same segment of society which "worried" about the children of the poor?

Institutions do not provide quality

service for powerless clients. Historically, in America, day care is an institution for the powerless who must admit to their powerlessness before receiving the service. We see from Ms. Steinfels' interviews how quickly even the parents (read: *mothers*) who have successfully struggled to establish quality care for their children can be made to feel that they have no choice but to abdicate their authority before the huffy professionalism of the staff, frustrating mazes of bureaucratic licensing, and insistent demands of the funding agencies.

Having carefully gathered many facts about day care, though, Ms. Steinfels is somewhat timid in using them towards a more assertive political analysis.

She suggests that we divorce the issue of day care from "new roles for women." But it is precisely those new roles, the assertion that the possibility of outside work is a *right* for all women and not a temporary economic necessity for those whose lives are in disorder, that will change the nature of day care. Some mothers will not admit

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says *Harvey Cox*, and he continues "this book will simply have to be read by anyone who wants to get some feeling about where the livelier-than-ever debates in religion and theology are heading."

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to helplessness, will demand quality child care, expect it, fight for it without the onus of low social status or economic failure. They might even insist that fathers become involved as well. Only then could day care become truly "family centered," supportive of parents' values and complementary to their authority.

A quick look at the *available* child care services across this country (something this reviewer did as an observer for the Abt Associates Report on child care cited in the book) will leave no doubt that at present these facilities are set up for the convenience of those who use the mothers' labor. Centers in the Southwest, for example, which predominantly cared for black children of mothers in "service" work stayed open up to twelve hours a day, starting as early as six a.m. Mothers rushed in their sleepy pre-schoolers, often without

breakfast, and returned exhausted many hours later to pick them up. It is questionable whether such scheduling was to the children's benefit, more likely an inviolate employers' schedule. Such attitudes cross class lines. Recently, at a job interview I was told by an academic dean: "If we offer you the job I don't want to hear that you can't hold eight o'clock class because you have children to get to school." And his field was *education*.

The "problem" of day care, then is less one of setting up appropriate facilities, difficult as that may be, rather than making *caring about children* a priority in all other institutions in this society. Why *not* half-time jobs for both parents, instead of full-time day care? Why *not* differential salaries which recognize the additional service to the society performed by an employee who is also a parent?

Who's Minding the Children also suggests diversifying types of services to include family day care, coordinated exchanges among parents, as well as better and more training for day care personnel, and more careful planning and less insecure funding. All feasible, all no accident we do not have them now. This will remain the case until a genuine concern for the welfare of those new generations alter the major patterns of social relationships.

Those interested in "macro" planning might well consider consulting their local parent and child before rushing into bricks their latest schemes.

resources, strengths, numbers, and political potency. None requires patronizing help. "Affirmative action" is demeaning and contemptible. The gaining of full equality of intelligence and spirit in a new culture requires time.

Let us—yes—do away with inequalities of law, and let us alter prejudicial institutional practices: more active recruiting, supportive help, and responsiveness to new desires are needed. Let those of us who are proportionately still "outside" the national culture fight for attention, representation, and the dignity of being taken for what we are. Let us do it by being better at politics, better in our professions, and better at articulating the new American dream than our rivals; *not* by asking for automatic places based upon our numbers.

We can demand proof that there is, indeed, today, "equality of opportunity." We cannot in conscience demand "equality of result." The sins of history, our own and others', cannot be repealed.

"Quotas" and "affirmative action" are political ploys, not moral imperatives. In the short term, they may be politically effective. Their moral deficiency is that, while undeniably of pragmatic value (particularly in dealing with liberals), they constitute an admission of cultural inferiority. Worse, such aims attribute our inferiority to others and not to ourselves. They are a refusal to accept responsibility.

Those who speak as victims do not speak as equals.

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Michael Novak (Cont.)

For two generations, and sometimes even today, special obstacles have been put in our way; we did not start at the same starting line as others. Still, it is up to us to crack this system, and to alter it in its depths. We do not need "affirmative action" nor "quotas"; and neither, we might say in their praise, do Blacks, Latinos, or Indians.

Blacks, Latinos, and Indians, like Slavic-Americans and Italian-Americans, have their own proper cultural

CORRESPONDENCE

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lies." Couldn't find it, but no matter. We still have John 16:33: "These things I have spoken to you that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have affliction. But take courage, I have overcome the world."

In what sense has Christ overcome the world? Valid question. But it seems reasonable to conclude, at least, that He was reassuring us that even though we can never hope to "master events,"

to use Novak's phrase, nevertheless we need not fear that events are inevitably going to master us either. In other words, we have a good fighting shot at a partial victory. I have the kind of metabolism that tells me that's good enough. Cheer up, Mike.

JOHN C. CORT

Just War Games

Worcester, Mass.

To the Editors: Peter Steinfels' recent discussion of just war theory was a timely and appropriate response to Gordon Zahn's appeal for a retrospective evaluation of the Vietnam war [Feb. 15]. Correctly focusing attention on the reliance of most Catholic opponents of the war on the principle of proportionality. Steinfels in his column unfortunately adopts a stance of resigned bewilderment in the face of the wrong paradox.

1. Of course the principle of proportionality, like the other just war principles, is easier to apply in retrospect. This is not only because effects are best measured after the event, but also because decisions regarding the means of war are made only after a long series of policy decisions which inevitably narrow the range of available options and bias the results of prospective analysis. Nevertheless, two points at least are clear. Some weapons of their very nature seem to eliminate the possibility of proportionality. On the basis of such an assessment of modern weapons technology Pope John could conclude within just war categories that war could no longer be an instrument of justice. Second, those who continue to use the categories of just war are obliged to attempt to measure *all* the foreseeable results of their actions and moralists have the obligation to ask these questions before the weapons are used. The failure of the strategists of the Pentagon Papers to measure such obvious factors as civilian casualties and cultural and ecological destruction, and the failure of the religious community to demand that they do so, should stand out in bold relief in our retrospective assessment of Vietnam.

2. Steinfels believes that the man in the street is a natural just war theorist and I think that is a large part of the problem. Not that the theory is not a usable one; I personally believe that it retains real validity. The problem arises in a context of political irresponsibility, where the man in the street and his moral advisers resolutely refuse to consider seriously the overall framework of policy determination and the specific decisions made within that framework. By the time the questions of ends and means get posed, it is already too late, for most real options have been eliminated. Having gone along with the drift of events, we are intimidated by the "crackpot realists" who demand that we choose between napalm and atomic weapons. Similarly, systematic efforts by the United States to evade or subvert the machinery established by the Geneva accords allowed a plausible case to be made in 1965 that escalation was the only available alternative—plausible at least to those who had successfully avoided serious moral consideration of

general and specific policies for over a decade.

3. The real problem for Christians is posed by the conflict between the personalist ethic of non-violence and the political ethic of responsibility. The proper arena for that problematic is not in the midst of war but in the midst of politics, in that arena of conflicting economic, social and military objectives where the decisions that ultimately determine war and peace are made. In that arena the real issue is the issue of power: the ability of some people to control and manipulate other people and the land and resources on which they depend. The control and/or elimination of that power is the central question. Our response to it will determine our assessment of the relevance and utility of just war and pacifist categories, and not the reverse. Unlike Steinfels, I would recommend that none of these matters should be left to an international tribunal.

DAVID J. O'BRIEN

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